

## BULLTOWN

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Captain Bull, the Delaware chief whose name is perpetuated in Bulltown on the Little Kanawha river in Braxton County, WV, came to the hills of northwest Virginia as an exile from his homeland on the upper Susquehanna in New York State. In 1764, when he led his twenty relatives to the site of the present town, he was fleeing the wrath of the English-Indian Commissioner, Sir William Johnson, who had become incensed against the Delaware after discovering Captain Bull's role in the Pontiac conspiracy.

Johnson had organized a band of English settlers and friendly Indians and in March of 1764 this group captured Bull and a number of his adherents. Bull was led in irons to New York City. After a short imprisonment, however, he had been released on his promise to leave the territory.

Captain Bull was the son of Teddyuscung, the last chieftain of the Delaware tribe, to whom a monument has been erected in Fairmont Park in Philadelphia, representing him, bow and spear in hand, plume of eagle feathers on his brow, stepping forth on his journey toward the setting sun.

Teddyuscung, born at Trenton, New Jersey about 1705, had been chosen Chief of the Delawares at about 50 years of age. He was once baptized by the Moravians as brother Gideon and was an Indian advocate of peace. Once General Braddock was defeated, Teddyuscung became an enemy of white settlers. He was burned to death on the night of April 16, 1764, when enemy Indians, either Seneca or Mohawk, set fire to his lodge in the Indian village at Wyoming in New York while he lay drunk.

After his father's death, Captain Bull led a band of dissatisfied Delaware braves into the hostile camp of Pontiac. His arrest and exile prevented him from becoming the Great Chief of the Delaware.

## PONTIAC'S CONSPIRACY

At the time of the Conspiracy, small English garrisons occupied the forts along the shores of the Great Lakes and in the territory drained by the Ohio River and its tributaries, and the French held posts on the Wabash and Mississippi Rivers and had a considerable settlement at New Orleans. Discontent smoldered amongst the Indians, since most of the Indians preferred the more casual French to the English, believing that the English would drive them from their hunting grounds and treat them with neglect and injustice.

French traders from St. Louis and Montreal worked on their fears and fomented disaffection and the result was an uprising under the leadership of Pontiac, Chief of the Ottawa warriors, who was determined to restore the supremacy that the French and Indians had enjoyed before the fall of Quebec and DeVaudreuil's capitulation at Montreal.

In 1763, Sir William Johnson estimated that Pontiac's forces were not more than ten thousand warriors from the Delaware, Iroquois, Shawnee, Guyandotte, Miami, Kickapoo, Ottawa and Ojibwa tribes. Captain Bull led about 600 Delawares who were included in Pontiac's plan and Bull was as deeply involved in the scheme as any other participant.

Eagle's "History of Pennsylvania", "The Pennsylvania Gazette", "Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania" and Miner's "History of Wyoming Valley" give details of two marauding raids of Captain Bull's followers. On October 8, 1763, the Delawares burned farms and houses and killed at least 23 people, men, women and children, and wounded many more. On another raid in the Wyoming Valley on October 15, 1763, the Delawares killed at least twenty people and destroyed many houses.

Early in 1764, Andrew Montour led a force of about 200 Iroquois and a few whites against a Delaware raiding party on the upper Sesquehanna in Steuben County New York. Twenty nine prisoners were captured, including Captain Bull. A 1764 letter from Commissioner William Johnson to Thomas Gage relates the story of Bull's capture and imprisonment and comments on his character and activities.

Dear Sir:

"I have the pleasure to acquaint you that the prisoners arrived here on the 15 of March & were yesterday sent down under a Guard of a Capt and 50 Provincials to Albany....The number of prisoners I have sent to Coll Elliot are 14 men, with Capt. Bull, a villian of the first rank, the manner of their being taken disagrees with what I first heard, Except that one of them was wounded, as he made a good deal of resistance when they Tyed him up, but it is with particular satisfaction I inform you that they are all of Kanestio and have many prisoners amongst them which Bull offered for his ransom, he told the party that took him that he had with his own hands killed 26 English since Spring & it appears that their design was to come here, make offers of peace, beg for a little ammunition & on their return destroy Cherry-Valley or some other of our settlements, they insulted the Indians of 2 or 3 Small Friendly villages & shot down their cattle, & took away their provisions by force. Capt Bull did not attempt to deny his behavior, and on my asking him on what account he became so inveterate an Enemy, he told me, he did not know, that he was advised to do it, & his party followed his example; he is a fellow of great address, but feigns ignorance & is full of prevarication, he is very likely and remarkably active as are several of the others with him, which makes me dread their escaping, altho' I told him if he attempted to escape, those in our hands would be put to death immediately."

Captain Bull was released from the New York prison on condition that he leave the State and never return. This he did, with more than forty Delawares, men, women and children appearing at Frederick Ice's settlement on the Cheat River in VA in the summer of 1764. They remained until the late Fall, when they moved up the Monongahela River and camped at the site of present day Fairmont, WV.

In the Spring of 1765, the Delawares moved to the site of present day Weston, WV and camped for a while before moving to the Bulltown site.

No one knows how or why Bull chose his next home along the Little Kanawha in what was to become Braxton county WV. Nevertheless, the location was ideal. Game was plentiful, rich ground grew good crops and there was a salt spring.

Although the saline waters of the spring at the Indian village were not very salty and about 800 gallons of water had to be evaporated by the primitive method of gathering the brine in wooden trough and heating it by dropping in hot stones to yield a bushel of salt, they were able to make enough for their own needs, with a small

quantity for trade. Salt was a precious commodity in those time and whites came from Randolph County to trade for salt as early as 1770.

The Indians hunted, fished, made salt and visited pioneer settlements in the country farther north, and according to Withers' "Chronicles of Border Warfare", the settlement had grown to more than a hundred persons by 1772. Withers' number of inhabitants is at considerable variance with a head count detailed in a letter from Captain James Booth to Zackwell Morgan. Booth stated that the town consisted of Captain Bull, sixteen warriors, fifteen squaws, eight or more children and twenty cabins. Since Booth was a contemporary of Captain Bull and Withers was writing more than fifty years after the events, Booth's figures seem more likely to be accurate.

Captain Bull, after coming to western Virginia, was a different character; during they years that he and his people inhabited the Little Kanawha valley, he was peaceful toward the whites with whom he came in contact, often hunting with them. His tepee was always open to the hunter and the pioneer and he was their friend. However, Bull's attitude was not typical of the times.

In other areas of the trans-Allagheney territory, Indian raids were committed with ever increasing frequency and by 1772 the threat of an Indian war occupied all minds. Tension between the western settlers and the Indians became constantly greater. The pioneers desired a final settlement and when they began laying plans for forcing the issue, war was assured.

Stories that the Indians at Bulltown were massacred by whites have appeared in a number of books, papers and journals and the following story from the WPA Writers Project can be accepted as typical.

#### STROUD FAMILY MASSACRED

"Shortly after the 1768 treaty with the Indians, Adam Stroud, a German, and his family, settled on what is now Stroud's Creek, near its junction with the Gauley River in what is now Webster County. Here he erected a crude log cabin and in the course of time cleared some land and planted crops. For four years he and his family enjoyed the freedom of the frontier unmolested. Then, in the month of June 1872, while Stroud was absent from his home, a party of Indian warriors, supposed to have been of the Shawnee tribe, murdered the entire German family of seven children and the mother. They also plundered the house and drove off what livestock the Strouds possessed."

"Because the Shawnees, who were guilty of the Stroud massacre, left a false trail leading in the general direction of the Delaware village, suspicion at once fell upon Captain Bull and his warriors; even Stroud himself expressed the belief that the Bulltown Indians were responsible for the massacre. When he arrived home that June day and found his entire family murdered, Stroud sped to the Hacker's Creek settlement in Lewis County and spread the alarm."

"An immediate cry went up to avenge the deed at once. Many, however, doubted that Bull or any of his band had any part in the killing. They held back because on frequent visits to the Little Kanawha village they had found the leader of the Bulltown Indians very friendly and were slow in being convinced of his guilt."

"Five men, Jesse Hughes, William White, John Cutright, William Hacker and a man by the name of Kettle, who would believe nothing but that the Bulltown Indians were guilty announced their intention of

proceeding against the Little Kanawha village. Jesse Hughes, like Lewis Wetzel, had a great hatred for the Indians -- whether friendly or not, and nothing delighted him more than an opportunity to kill a redskin. It is therefore possible that Hughes, because of his feeling towards the Indians, and because he lived only a short distance from their settlement, instigated the action against Captain Bull's people."

"Hughes and his party went to Bulltown, and returned a day or two later. They denied having as much as seen an Indian, telling the Hacker's Creek settlers that Bull and his people had left the country. What really did occur at the Indian village was not disclosed until several years later. On his death bed in 1852 when 105 years old, John Cutright told the true story of the disappearance of Captain Bull and his fellow Delawares."

"Cutright said that as Jesse Hughes and the four other men left the Hacker's Creek settlement, and made their way toward the Bulltown colony, they became more and more embittered against the Indians. Hughes, it appears, goaded the men on, and planned the best way to attack the Indian village. With his usual cunning, Hughes planned to take the Indians completely by surprise." "He succeeded, and falling upon the Delawares before they were aware that and danger was near, the Hughes party killed every member of the Indian settlement, men, women, and children alike. Realizing the extent of their malefaction, the men, fearful of possible unpleasant consequences when their deed became known, removed the last evidence of their crime by throwing the bodies of the Indians into the Little Kanawha River. Thus ended the career of the notorious Delaware chieftain whose name will not be forgotten so long as Bulltown exists."

This massacre was first reported in A.S. Withers' "Chronicles of Border Warfare", published in 1831. Withers was not certain that the story was true and gave the names of only two of the alleged assassin, William White and William Hacker. He further explained that White and Hacker had planned to go to Bulltown to see if they could find evidence that the Delawares had participated in the Stroud massacre. The two men were reported to have returned to Hacker's Creek and reported that the entire Bulltown village was vacant. The men were alleged to have inadvertently said something in following years that indicated that they were guilty of the massacre.

L.V. McWhorter, in a footnote to the Withers story, added the death bed confession story and the names of Jesse Hughes and John Cutright. The name Kettle is from an unknown source. Other manuscripts substitute Adam Stroud for Kettle.

Although these accounts have been accepted as fact for many years, other authors doubt its truth. An anonymous writer of an article in "Awhile Ago Times", reprinted in "The Hacker's Creek Journal" states that Chief Bull and his Delawares were moved from Bulltown by the Indian Affairs Commissioner in May 1772 and references a number of documents proving that the Delawares moved south to the lower Mississippi, where Chief Bull died after 1810.

Robert B. Smith states that in 1772, Captain Bull and his people moved to the White River in Indiana, about eighteen miles from present day Wabash. In 1778, after the capture of English General Hamilton, they removed to the Mississippi. Smith cites Simon Kenton's "Notes", Draper's "Manuscripts" and private documents in support of his statements.

According to Smith, traditional Hacker history states that Withers "stole" the manuscript for "Chronicles of Border Warfare"

from William Hacker. The fact that William Powers and William Hacker advertised the sale of a forthcoming "History" in a Morgantown newspaper lends credence to the story. The book was to be published in 1825, if sufficient subscriptions were obtained.

The "Hacker's Creek Journal" Vol.10 Issue 2, p.23, states that Withers was hired by Clarksburg, VA (WV) publisher Joseph Israel to rewrite chronicles by Hacker and Powers that "... are said to have been published in the 1820's by a newspaper in Morgantown."

If these things are not enough, let us examine the stories rationally. Withers was writing 59 years after the event and was not sure that the story was true. McWhorter was writing more than a hundred years after the event. The alleged "deathbed confession" of John Cutright was supposed to have occurred in 1852, 80 years after the event, and more than 20 years before McWhorter's writing. Any deathbed statement of a person 105 years old probably owes more to the questions and perceptions of the hearer than of the dying person. And any verbal report of such a confession 20 years in the past is highly suspect.

A history of the Hughes Family, published in "The Hacker's Creek Journal", states:

"In 1786, a party of Indians murdered Jesse's father, Thomas Hughes and in 1787, another party of Indians led by the white renegade, Leonard Schoolcraft, captured Jesse's daughter. Although Jesse was able to purchase his daughter's freedom the following year, the two incidents turned Jesse and his brother Elias into implacable enemies of the Indians."

Note that Jesse and his brother were not turned into "implacable enemies of the Indians" until four years after the Bulltown massacre is alleged to have occurred.

Killing more than forty persons and throwing them in a river would be quite a warm days work for five men, even if the victims were totally passive. Considering that the Indians were experienced warriors, albeit somewhat out of practice, and given the rather primitive weapons of the period, the slaughter of so many by so few seems highly unlikely, if not impossible.

The Little Kanawha River at Bulltown is a rather small and shallow affair and throwing a hundred bodies in such a river in June is not quite the same as throwing a handful of pebbles in the Mississippi at Memphis. It is doubtful that a hundred bodies could be thrown in such a river by five men in "a day or two", the time frame from the WPA paper, in such a manner that they would not be visible. And even if the bodies were sunk in the river, they would not stay sunk. The writer of this sketch has participated in several body recovery operations and has ample experience to know that bodies sunk in a shallow river in warm weather usually surface within 48 hours. If the Bulltown massacre did occur as alleged, someone should have commented to some author or other about the disproportionate number of dead Indians in the Little Kanawha at a specific period.

The WPA paper mentions the coming of John and Benjamin Conrad to Bulltown in 1800 and mentions that Adam O'Brien blazed a trail from Sutton to Bulltown in 1792 and says that "many 'squatters' came to the Bulltown Country before the Conrad brothers, but only for the purpose of hunting and obtaining salt from the springs."

From these statements, we must conclude that the village site was regularly visited in the years following the alleged massacre, but there have been no reports of bones and other traces that one would expect to find on the site of such a massacre.

The writer of the "Awhile Ago Times", article terms the entire story "A Ridiculous Tale." Perhaps Smith's statement describes such a situation best:

"If these five men could attack Bulltown, where sixteen warriors were fortified in twenty cabins and they being in the open and fighting behind trees, the Squaws were no doubt loading weapons for the warriors and they all being aware of the approach of the white men, it would be a feat unheard of and unsurpassed in all history of the frontier, to believe that they could kill all sixteen of the warriors, the fifteen squaws and eight children, dump their bodies in the Little Kanawha River and never suffer wound or casualty themselves. This unbelievable and much too much to comprehend."

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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